

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Proposition 50, Chapter 8 IRWM Implementation Step 1

PIN: 3998
APPLICANT NAME: Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County
PROJECT TITLE: Northern Santa Cruz County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
FUNDS REQUESTED: \$32,209,283
COST MATCH: \$23,623,323
TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$55,832,606

DESCRIPTION: This proposal puts forth a coordinated suite of projects that have emerged from the IRWM planning process as the highest priorities for protecting communities from drought, protecting and improving water quality, and maintaining and enhancing habitats. The partner agencies are seeking \$32,209,283 in state funding to implement this proposal, which will be matched with \$23,623,323 in regional contributions. The agencies will advance the state's goal of promoting a new model for water management. The region faces serious issues of water supply and water quality, as well as significant environmental problems. Agencies have worked together since at least 1998 on these issues, and have coordinated on water bond funding since April 2002.

Question: Consistency with Minimum IRWM Standards - This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated that the IRWM Plan meets the minimum standards.

Pass

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Adopted IRWM Plan and Proof of Formal Adoption. Weighting factor is 1. 4

The IRWMP was proposed for adoption by all relevant member agencies at the time of application submittal. As on January 18, 2006 a majority of the necessary participants have formally adopted the IRWMP.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Description of Region. Weighting factor is 1. 4

The IRWMP region is wholly in Santa Cruz County. The Pajaro watershed is in the county but not in this IRWMP region and has part of a separate IRWMP Step 1 application. It is unclear why Watsonville Slough area is in this IRWMP, since it is in the lower Pajaro watershed. Better coordination with proposal #5636 Pajaro River WMA on Watsonville may be appropriate. Clear maps of the region are provided. Water quantity and quality resources and needs are discussed. Ecological process, social, economic, and cultural conditions are discussed.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Objectives. Weighting factor is 1. 5

IRWMP objectives and how they were developed are described. Water related conflicts in the region are described in the Regional Description section.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Water Management Strategies and Integration. Weighting factor is 1. 5

The IRWMP defines "strategies" as potential projects that meet the IRWMP's objectives. The water management strategies in the Guidelines are referenced; some are discussed as components of the 55 potential projects. Many of the projects address more than one of the strategies. Key linkages between projects and the IRWMP objectives they address are discussed. Some benefits of integrating the strategies are discussed in Section G under project linkages.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Priorities and Schedule. Weighting factor is 1. 4

Regional priorities were designed to select projects to implement. The three project priorities were: 1) meet at least three IRWMP objectives, 2) be ready to construct, and 3) have adequate local matching funds. The 17 projects deemed high priority are the short-term and the other 38 projects are the long-term implementation priorities. The schedule for the 17 projects is in Attachment 8; one project is to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the 17 projects in order to assess whether they meet their intended objectives. Another project is to refine and upgrade the existing IRWMP. It is not fully explained what decision making process will be used to adjust project or IRWMP priorities.

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Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Implementation. Weighting factor is 1.

4

Implementation projects are described. The project schedule and responsible parties are included in Attachment 8. The institutional structure for implementation is described on pages. Technical feasibility of projects is assumed to be within relevant documents that are listed, but they are not included and directly explained.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Impacts and Regional Benefits. Weighting factor is 1.

4

Although many of the implementation projects are to be locally implemented, they are linked in the IRWMP to regional improvements. Benefits to DACs are described. A fuller discussion of negative impacts from implementation of the IRWMP would be helpful.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Technical Analysis and Plan Performance. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The technical support for most of the implementation projects is in previous studies referenced under each project, but they are not directly discussed in the IRWMP. How existing data were technically reviewed is unclear, but a technically related method for selection of projects is described. Several data gaps were identified and two implementation projects propose to collect monitoring data to address gaps. Evaluation and monitoring of IRWMP performance is one of the proposed projects.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Data Management. Weighting factor is 1.

3

Only a general mechanism for data management is presented. Dissemination of data is also generally described as a partnership with existing data managers (e.g., the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary). Project #16 will ensure integration of IRWMP monitoring with both SWAMP and GAMA.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Financing. Weighting factor is 1.

4

Financing for IRWMP implementation is described in general terms as coming from matching funds from in-kind services, local agency/organization cash contribution, and a Federal 319 grant. The six construction projects and their O&M costs are the responsibility of the identified implementing agencies. O&M details are provided on another six projects. Beneficiaries are described as the residents of the region with only a few specifics provided, such as the benefit to Watsonville (a DAC). Who will pay for each project is not always evident.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Relation to Local Planning & Sustainability. Weighting factor is 1.

5

This criterion was adequately addressed. Proposed projects list the relevant local planning documents on which they are based. Santa Cruz County, who is an active participating agency in the IRWMP, makes many land-use decisions. Most of the IRWMP projects come directly from existing local or regional planning documents.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Stakeholder Involvement & Coordination. Weighting factor is 1.

4

Stakeholder involvement in creating the IRWMP focused on known, active, local agencies and groups under the direction of the 6 participating agencies. Most of the structure for stakeholder involvement will be during IRWMP implementation. However, all of it is not in place, but it will be fully developed with the implementation of Project #17. Environmental justice concerns are briefly discussed. Obstacles to IRWMP implementation are mentioned. Affected State and federal agencies are listed and specifics of their involvement are described project by project.

Question: Funding Match. This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated the ability to meet the minimum funding match or has requested a waiver or reduction in the funding match.

Pass

Question: Description of Proposal. Weighting factor is 3.

12

A map nicely displays locations of water supply and water quality projects. The proposal and the IRWMP adequately describe the 17 projects. The proposal will implement all of the IRWMP components. The proposal consists of several "eligible water management elements" described in the Guidelines. Project #18 (project management and administration of the 17 projects) was added to the proposal but is not in the IRWMP. Some of the administration costs may be appropriate, but could have been incorporated in each project instead of a separate project. Environmental reviews are summarized. Water quality and NPS projects are described adequately in the proposal. Integration of the 17 projects among themselves and with other grant funded projects is discussed in the proposal and in the IRWMP. Project #16 will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implementing the proposal.

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Question: Project Prioritization. Weighting factor is 2.

8

The original identified 55 projects were prioritized and 17 high priority projects became the core of the proposal. It appears the IRWMP was developed to accommodate and link the 17 projects as opposed to having an IRWMP develop independent, regional priorities and then select projects to meet those regional priorities. The projects in the proposal are not prioritized among themselves. Project #17 will continue the task of prioritizing additional projects (e.g., from the original 55) and adjusting the existing priorities to meet new conditions as needed. The priorities discussion in the proposal is a summary of a more detailed prioritization discussion in the IRWMP.

Question: Cost Estimate. Weighting factor is 1.

3

Each project has a detailed cost estimate. Some projects include direct project administration costs, but it is unclear if they are reasonable given that Project #18 is for administration of the other 17 projects. Project 18 includes \$2.4 million for construction/implementation, but it is unclear how this relates to management and administration. Also, it can not be determined if the Project 18 costs are reasonable.

Question: Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

5

Each of the 17 projects has a list of milestones with assigned completion dates. The high priority elements of the IRWMP have been proposed for funding.

Question: Need. Weighting factor is 2.

8

A summary of the regional water management needs based on more detailed analyses of the needs presented in the IRWMP is in Attachment 9. The impacts from not completing the proposed projects are described in general terms as allowing the existing water quality, water quantity, and environmental problems to continue to worsen. Economic, fiscal, and environmental impacts related to the proposal are only discussed in general.

Question: Disadvantaged Communities. Weighting factor is 2.

8

Incomes levels throughout the area are nicely displayed. Some low income households will benefit indirectly from some of the projects. About 12% of the region's residents live below the poverty line. Only Project #12 will directly benefit the DAC of Watsonville. The entire proposal has over 40% match funds provided.

Question: Program Preferences. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The proposal adequately meets the first five Program Preferences. However, there is a project (#11) to provide safe drinking water, but it does not directly go to a DAC. Project # 12 does provide some water quality benefits to the DAC of Watsonville.

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| TOTAL SCORE: 98 |
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